1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

582 [587]

occasionally she is taken as his wife if he is unmarried or is able to support another wife. No trace of the sororate was found among the Kols.

BARS TO MARRIAGE. Before marriage is possible there are a few other matters that must be carefully checked. That the younger child must never be married before the elder, is a custom quite commonly observed all over India; the proper and the correct thing is to marry the children in the order of their ages. There is another interesting limitation; the eldest boy of a family (*Jetha*) must never marry the eldest girl (*Jetha* or *Jethi*) in the month of *Jetha* (May-June). If this be done it is bound to result in a very unhappy and quarrelsome match.

582 732

Physical or mental defects are also bars to marriage, or at least to satisfactory marriages. A person who is half-witted or deformed has very little chance of making a favourable marriage. Often such children do not survive, not through any deliberate action on the part of the parents, but being so helpless, or unable to take care of themselves as the children of the poor must do, they are simply not able to survive. Blind girls generally remain unmarried, but a blind boy who knows some kind of hand work which he may use to help support his wife may be married. If deformed children survive and do not get married they remain at home where their parents support them.

582 [836]

If a Kol bachelor should "keep" a woman he is not allowed to contract a real marriage until such time as this woman is renounced; the *panch* sees to this. It is not unknown that a bachelor may keep a young widow, give her up for marriage with another girl, and then after those formalities are over and forgotten, bring her back into his house as a kept woman. He will have to pay a fine or give a feast as the *panch* decides, but he is not forced to drive her out.

[837 684 692]

584

Sometimes a man feels that he cannot stand the expense and obligations that go with a *pakka* or real marriage. He desires to marry, say, a certain girl, or his parents want him to do so, and there can be found no valid objection to such a match, nor is there any element in it which would force an elopement. In such a case the matter is put up to the *panchayat* and if it is ascertained that the woman in question has not been married before and that there are no other valid bars to the marriage the permission may be given. Instead of the wedding formalities the only expense involved is that of feeding the proper persons—the *panch*, the relatives, or perhaps the whole community. This decision usually rests with the *panch* itself. The formal ceremonies consist in the putting of ten black bangles on the arms of the

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putrid behind. She often dwells in a palm tree. Certain Munda tribes, like the Bhuiyas, sometimes extract the fetus from a woman dying in pregnancy, and the two are buried on the opposite sides of a stream, as it is the theory that no spirit can cross water.[1] If the two should join they become witches. Kols do not practice this as far as we were able to learn, and no operation of this nature is performed. The woman is buried with the child still in her womb.

The Danawa is said by the Kols to be one of the most powerful of all spirits. He is likely related to the Vedic *Danava* who was connected with Vritra, one of the atmospheric demons. He lives in tall trees, and, if he can get the opportunity, attacks one at night, catching his victim round the throat and almost choking the unfortunate person to death. He is particularly met with in the Kaimur jungles.

The Jind, or more popularly *Jin*, according to the Kols, is the spirit of a Mohammedan, although it is usually considered one of the many kinds of spirits known to Mohammedans. Kols have a very bad opinion of *Jinds*, yet say that they know little about them, as they do not pay much attention to Kols but are out to injure Mohammedans.

The Kabbis is a lover of human blood. This demon has long teeth and sharp nails and attacks one ferociously. The nails are used to make deep cuts which let the blood flow and it is sucked or licked up by them. If the victim should struggle and give trouble, the demon will plunge his long teeth into the body and thus hold him while he drains out the man's life blood.

Matia is the demon of the whirlwind. It may destroy crops, bring up great storms and carry away roofs and thatch houses. During the warm season whirlwinds are common and one can trace their course by a cloud of dust reaching far up into the sky. Vultures soar about, looking for those whom *Matia* may destroy.

The Pret is the spirit of the deformed, the cripple, or the mentally defective. Males become *prets* and females are *pretins*. While Kols commonly mention them they usually do not believe them to be very dangerous, nor can they cause much trouble. Rather they should be pitied and fed, so sometimes food and water are placed out for them if they are suspected of being in the vicinity.

The Rakshasa is a terrible injurer and the very name of this demon is an euphemism, 'the preserver.' Most Kols have a great fear of a *rakshasa* and the report is that this kind is more commonly seen than any other and that they also suck blood if they can get a chance. They are usually about at night time and are very dangerous to women who are with child, and try to gain access to the house by

1. Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 195.

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from the tin or the bottle, around the whole or part of the village. The *hom* sacrifice should be made by each household, and following the whole procedure, animals may be sacrificed at the village shrine, and a feast enjoyed by all.

TESTS FOR EVIL SPIRITS. It was said by Kols that there are certain obvious evidences of spirit possession. Mental cases are attributed to evil spirits as are cases of paralysis and the like. If one acts irrationally it is taken for granted that he is possessed and efforts should be made to free him.

Sometimes it is not quite so easy to tell whether an evil spirit is really about, or whether he should be blamed for the misfortune under consideration. If a man has a disease which defies treatment, and if he is wasting away, it may be that he has an evil spirit working in him. To determine for certain there are some tests which may be made. Among them are the following:

On the floor of the room, in which the man lies ill, a circle made with wheat flour is marked out, and in the centre of the circle an earthenware lamp is placed. Grains of wheat and *urad* pulse are carefully counted and put in a particular position and sequence. The Baiga or *panda*, as the case may be, then pronounces some *mantras* over them and the room is left to the ill man for the rest of the night. In the morning the grains are counted again and their positions carefully checked, and the ring of flour is examined for any marks or indications of having been disturbed. If there are signs of a disturbance of any kind, or if there are missing grains, it is a sure proof that an evil spirit has been about and has meddled with those articles. Of course, it is difficult to believe that any disturbance could not have taken place with mice and rats everywhere in abundance.

A second method is based upon the use of limes. It will be recalled that spirits are very fond of this kind of fruit and greedily attack them. Several limes are therefore taken, and a large number of sharp needles stuck into each, perhaps as many as twenty-five. These limes are then placed in a position where a spirit, were it to come into the room, would be sure to notice them. In the morning these are again carefully examined, the needles pulled out, or the limes broken and the needles inspected. If there should be a drop of blood on any of the needles the spirit has been there. It would have seen the lime, snatched at it greedily without observing the needles imbedded in it and been pricked by their sharp points. Any formation of rust would be interpreted as blood and be the indication of the presence of a spirit.